Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification to read as follows:

On page 8, please replace the paragraph starting at line 8 with the following paragraph:

Some services that operate at a higher rate may be transmitted in a concatenated signal. Concatenation is a procedure by which tributaries having same source and destination are adapted into ~~a~~ larger container sizes as a multiple integer of one of the above containers with a single POH, and travel together along the same path. For example, services that may fit into sixteen C-4 containers may be mapped into a C-4-16c container, which is 16 times larger than a C-4. G.707 ~~defies~~ defines concatenations of C-4.

On page 13, please replace the paragraph starting at line 9 with the following paragraph:

TU pointer transformation is a procedure introduced by this invention, whereby the AU pointer is adapted to become a TU pointer, i.e. the AU pointer is removed from the SOH and placed in the payload. Nesting of pointers according to the novel hierarchy implies, in the example of Figure 2, translation of AU-3's and AU-4's into the new tributary units TU-4 and TU-5. It is however to be understood that the invention is applicable for other rates. AU-to-TU translation ~~TU pointer transformation~~ and TU pointer transformation according to the present invention are illustrated by the fined dotted lines denoted with a-f.

On page 14, please replace the paragraph starting at line 18 with the following paragraph:

The translation from AU-n to their corresponding ~~AU-n~~ TU-n is shown in Table 2, which complements Figure 2. The information content and pointers of both structures are identical, it is only the position of pointers with respect to the payload that changes during translation. Table 2 also shows how the very high rate network transports synchronous traffic created using byte interleaved AU-3s and AU-4s, by hiding the pointers from the line through nesting pointers. The last column indicates where a translation operation takes place in Figure 2, and indicates the Figures where the respective operation is illustrated in more details.